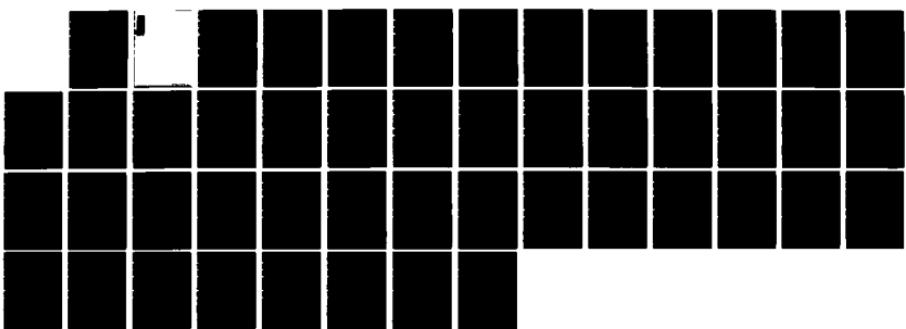


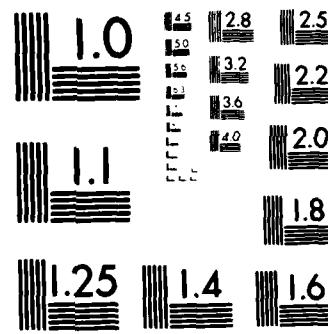
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TO THE OFFICER COR (U) ARMY WAR COLL CARLISLE BARRACKS  
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aspire to serve.

This essay attempts to determine why service in USAREC is one which, in the main, is avoided by the Officer Corps. It examines current perceptions of such service, attempts to analyze why such service is believed to be anathema to the Corps, and offers recommendations on what the Army, under OPMS, can do to change the USAREC image, and render service in USAREC as a viable career option for the Officer Corps. The views of senior officers currently attending the US Army War College were sought in an effort to disclose the depth of feeling about a USAREC assignment. Data were obtained primarily through a survey of the 1986 class, through a literature search (though a paucity of references exists), and through selected interviews of members of the class who had served previously in USAREC.

The research effort revealed that officers are generally negatively disposed toward USAREC service. Their reservations are examined in the essay; their perceptions are either confirmed or refuted by the author. The essay concludes with an exhortation to seek the challenges of a USAREC assignment, and offers some suggestions which are necessary to change the current institutional views and modus operandi to cause USAREC to be a highly-sought-after, and enriching career opportunity. The future portends that our very best officers--specially trained and motivated--are required to insure continued recruiting success into the next decade.

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USAREC'S IMAGE TO THE OFFICER CORPS  
GOOD, BAD, OR IRRELEVANT?  
- A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE -

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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7 April 1986

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## ABSTRACT

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Good, Bad, or Irrelevant?  
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Since the disappearance of the draft in 1973, the US Army had had to rely on "volunteers" to fill its ranks. The responsibility for the important task of manning the force -- perhaps the Army's # 1 priority -- has rested with the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC). Because of its demonstrated record of success in recent years, one may argue that USAREC has fully matured, and now ranks as the most successful command in the Army. Yet, it is a successful command to which few members of the Officer Corps aspire to serve. <

This essay attempts to determine why service in USAREC is one which, in the main, is avoided by the Officer Corps. It examines current perceptions of such service, attempts to analyze why such service is believed to be anathema to the Corps, and offers recommendations on what the Army, under CPMIS, can do to change the USAREC image, and render service in USAREC as a viable career option for the Officer Corps. The views of senior officers currently attending the US Army War College were sought in an effort to disclose the depth of feeling about a USAREC assignment. Data were obtained primarily through a survey of the 1986 class, through a literature search (though a paucity of references exists), and through selected interviews of members of the class who had served previously in USAREC.

The research effort revealed that officers are generally negatively disposed toward USAREC service. Their reservations are examined in the essay; their perceptions are either confirmed or refuted by the author. The essay concludes with an exhortation to seek the challenges of a USAREC assignment, and offers some suggestions which are necessary to change the current institutional views and modus operandi to cause USAREC to be a highly-sought-after, and enriching career opportunity. The future portends that our very best officers -- specially trained and motivated -- are required to insure continued recruiting success into the next decade.

USAREC'S IMAGE TO THE OFFICER CORPS  
GOOD, BAD, OR IRRELEVANT?  
- A PRESCRIPTION FOR CHANGE -

During his address to the 1986 class of the US Army War College, General Maxwell R. Thurman, the Army Vice Chief of Staff, and a former Commanding General of the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), spoke, among other issues, of the recruiting successes of recent years enjoyed by the United States Army in attracting large numbers of high quality young men and women into its ranks. During his remarks, General Thurman also recalled the recruiting nadir of 1979 when all of the Armed Services failed to achieve their recruiting goals. Rhetorically, the General quizzed the class -- a representative slice of the Army's next generation of its top leaders -- on whether or not it could recall those early 'dark days' of the "Volunteer Army." His pause, and the 'thinking hush' which came over the auditorium, were indeed pregnant ones.

General Thurman was perhaps attempting to do more for those present than merely to recall the good and bad times of recruiting for the Army and for USAREC. I believe he was publicly congratulating the Recruiting Command for its hard-won success; and, too, I believe he was challenging all of us present to perform a role -- inside and outside of USAREC -- to insure that future success in this important endeavor for the Army and the nation continues into the next decade. Indeed, continued success

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is critical for the Army as it moves ahead with a quickened pace toward modernization, and with an even greater demand for the services of America's very best, young citizens.

One may argue that the recent past in recruiting gains is only the prologue for even greater and richer times ahead. To be sure, 1979 was a long time ago (Is six years, really?). Today, thanks to the Congress and the American people who have made available expanded enlistment bonuses and strong educational programs (the New GI Bill and the New Army College Fund), we have at hand now essential recruiting incentives to assist in avoiding the hard and bitter lessons of the past.

Well, are the hard times behind us; or are they still ahead? It can be the latter. It is my contention that, for the future, recruiting will be the Army's greatest challenge, and it will require our very best leadership to be successful in the days ahead.

#### Goals, Budgets, and National Priorities

That continued success at recruiting is critical for the Army and the Nation is indeed an understatement! The important goal of "manning the force" -- both the active and reserve components -- will doubtless remain in the forefront of the Army's thinking and planning for years to come. In my view, it is perhaps the key goal, for without its accomplishment the Army

can not proceed with its other missions and requirements.

While it may be a truism to say that the Army leadership will remain committed, where and to the extent it can, to provide the personnel and budgetary resources required to make the Army's and USAREC's people-mission achievable in the out years, there have appeared, nonetheless, sufficient indicators (and some rather strong warnings) to forecast that continued, future success in this ultra-important endeavor may not come so easily. Shrinking budgets and the effect of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget amendment, competing demands for national resources in and outside of the military, diminishing recruiting markets, the threats of diminished recruiting incentives, and changing youth propensities, are but a few of the indicators to suggest that manning the force at the same quality levels we are now providing will be no small task in the decade ahead.

The volunteer process (or rather the 'national process' for providing manpower for the military services) is an expensive undertaking. In its totality, from the recruiting process itself to the providing of the basic and fundamental needs of servicemen in pay and allowances, and all else in between and beyond, the cost of maintaining a volunteer military comes at a great price; but one which must be paid. For the moment, however, it is probably safe to say that the volunteer process, however difficult or expensive, or however politically sensitive, will remain with us for some time.

Another Banner Year in 1985 for USAREC

After this brief introduction and review of over ten years of "volunteer" recruiting -- its successes, its failures, and its challenges for the future -- one would think it obvious, even to the casual observer, that USAREC ranks today as one of, and I would argue, the most successful commands in the Army. It has done its mission well, even through the hard times. As its current Commanding General, General Alan K. Ono, remarked in September 1985, while addressing his assembled major commanders during USAREC's annual Sales and Training Conference, "USAREC had its most successful year ever, against the competition, against the doomsday experts, against a favorable employment picture,"<sup>1</sup> and against all the odds. He congratulated his commanders and staff for a truly remarkable performance, and an outstanding accomplishment.

Because of USAREC's demonstrated continued record of success, one might surmise at this point that officers and non-commissioned officers alike would be "volunteering" themselves to serve in so successful an organization -- flocking in large numbers to a command with an obvious penchant for excellence! Unfortunately, such a surge to serve is not present. I would argue that such a desire to serve has never been present. In my view, then, it is past time to look into what I call the 'phenomenon' of why an "avoidance to serve" happens. It is

time to discover what might be wrong with USAREC, or what might be wrong with the Personnel Distribution System out of Washington, or even, what might be wrong with the Officer and Non-commissioned Corps themselves. Simply, why do career-oriented and Nation and Army-oriented professionals, not want to serve in an organization which is clearly a "winner?" The bottom line to be recognized even at this point may be that -- even well into its second decade of existence -- USAREC (and perhaps even the Army) has a serious credibility problem. Too, as ironic as it may appear for the Army's primary sales organization, the problem may simply be one of image, of false perceptions, and of a command which has been unsuccessful at 'selling' itself. For USAREC, there may be an important story to tell! It is a success story, a dynamite command, and a challenging, rewarding, and satisfying organization with which to be associated. But, who knows; and perhaps even worse, who cares?

#### If a Problem, How Deep?

Available historical data indicate that only 15-20% of the Noncommissioned Officers who serve in USAREC volunteer for such service.<sup>2</sup> Most NCOs are DA-selected for such duties. To me, this fact alone says something -- ever so subtly -- to the "institution." Perhaps the real question to be asked at this point is to wonder whether the institution is listening, or even whether the institution cares, especially when all it has

to do to accomplish its mission is to detail the right number of NCOs to fill appropriate quotas in USAREC. I grant that the current system is more 'scientific' than I have described or given credit, i.e., nominations, interviews, recommendations, etc., by field commanders in an attempt to select the "best" NCOs for USAREC. However, sadly, it must be reported and accepted almost as fact that few field commanders -- try as they might -- understand or recognize the traits required of a recruiter to give an NCO and a MILPERCEN assignment manager a positive recommendation for his service in USAREC. Simply, our field commanders, even when acting in their mentor roles, are not wholly supportive of a USAREC assignment. More times than not, in my view, our commanders have a tendency to 'protect' their best, capable NCOs by encouraging them to avoid a USAREC assignment. Officers simply do not see a recruiting job as important for advancement. Clearly, the Army has a problem when it must "detail" approximately 85% of its recruiting force. It would seem only logical to conclude that NCOs -- who too have learned the lessons of "mainstream," of "ticket-punching" (we officers have taught them well), view a USAREC assignment as "high-risk, low-payoff," and one possessive of great "damage-potential" to career. Yet, the NCO -- that top-notch professional (and USAREC thankfully is full of them) is the glue, and the real success story to be told when advancing the plaudits of a recruiting assignment.

### Officer Service in USAREC

At this point, it might serve our purpose well to ask if things really do change when it comes to analyzing just how far OPMS has truly evolved. I grant the reader that my thesis is a complex, controversial and an emotional one. I can be saying that "careerism" is alive and well, that mentors breed and foster the "get the right job syndrome," or even that the institution itself, at least in regard to a USAREC assignment for officers, is closing its eyes and shielding its ears to a problem -- a serious one at that -- which can be gnawing away at the system and the Corps itself; and in the long term, hurting the Recruiting Command in the process.

In conceptualizing my thoughts to develop this essay, however, I began to question my own perceptions. Was I seeing and hearing correctly, or was I imagining a problem which did not exist? Clearly, my literature search revealed a paucity of official studies and documents specifically addressing, or even remotely associated with my theme that the Officer Corps avoids a USAREC assignment as a deadly poison; or worse yet, that the "institution" -- a part of which is the Army's personnel distribution system itself -- fosters such attitudes and activities. With little data available then to confirm or refute gut feelings, a survey was developed to gather more specific information regarding the opinions and perceptions of senior

Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels at the USAWC about the merits and demerits of a USAREC assignment for officers.

USAWC Class of 1986 Survey on USAREC

Questionnaires were distributed to 156 students -- students who by branch would be (have been) most eligible to serve in USAREC. The professional services (MC, DC, MS, VC, JA, AN) were excluded. Completed questionnaires were returned by 109 students (70%); and, practically without exception, most surveys contained written comments in response to general questions addressing USAREC as an assignment option. Many of the surveys returned were in themselves emotional outpourings to indicate that USAREC is perceived by the Officer Corps as "risky business."

The following sample returns and an accompanying analysis and discussion of the survey findings indicate how "senior Army leaders" at the AWC view USAREC in relation to other critical assignments in the Army -- either at the field grade or company grade levels. Perhaps it should not come as a startling revelation that USAREC ranked last among jobs which respondents would recommend to subordinate officers. The AWC officers were asked to don their "mentoring hats," and with all else being equal, rank order assignments. In descending order, their choices were:

1. Command (MTOE, General)

2. Department of Army Staff (Washington)
3. Major Command/Staff (FORSCOM, Corps, Division)
4. Specialty Assignment (Alternate, FAO, IG, Etc)
5. High level Staff (JCS, DOD, Joint)
6. R&D Assignment (RDTE)
7. Reserve Components (Army HQ, ROTC, Advisor)
8. USAREC (Command and/or Staff)

Obviously, the Corps still believes that command is ultra-important to career enhancement, and to personal satisfaction (38% ranked it as # 1). Equally, it believes that USAREC is an assignment to be avoided. 40% of the respondents ranked USAREC dead last; and 80% ranked it in the bottom three choices. This ranking I find interesting for a command that, again, has clearly sought and found 'excellence,' -- almost four years of continued excellence since the drought of 1979-1980. Perhaps, too, the results of the survey should not be too surprising, since 36% of those surveyed have never served in USAREC, and gained their "success" (e.g., attendance at a Senior Service College) through other assignments. But they did have definite views (albeit from a distance) of a USAREC assignment.

Results from an earlier survey of a related subject conducted at the AMC in 1975 which provided for an even broader listing of choices, i.e., 14 options -- during a period when an uncertain and fledgling command (USAREC) was in its infancy (1973-75) -- reflected no less than the same result. In this

case, USAREC ranked 14th among 14 career assignment options. Surprisingly, the choices of the current survey, though offered somewhat differently, fall out in the same relative standing as on the survey conducted eleven years ago.<sup>3</sup> Even while CPMS has continued to evolve, beliefs, hopes, and perceptions of what is good for a career, and conversely, what is harmful, do not appear to change radically over time. Still the nagging question haunts me -- why not serve, or want to serve with a winner?

Some answers to the USAREC "last-choice option" are found in the results obtained, and comments provided, on the remainder of the 1986 survey. When asked to do a relative risk analysis, again with all things being equal, the following, descending order prevailed:

1. USAREC (Command and/or Staff) (Highest risk job)
2. Command (MTOE, General)
3. Department of Army Staff (Washington)
4. High-level Staff (JCS, DOD, Joint)
5. Major Command Staff (FORSCOM, Corps, Division)
6. Reserve Components (Army HQ, ROTC, Adviser)
7. R&D Assignment (RD&E)
8. Specialty Assignment (Alternate, FAO, IG, Etc.)

What is surprising and significant is that, in the sample surveyed, USAREC is perceived more of a "risk assignment" than commanding an MTOE unit, although the percentage difference

is slight when ranked as "highest" risk -- USAREC at 43%; and Command at 41%. Yet, officers are willing to risk career to command in branch specialties (which is understandable), but not in USAREC. Officer comments on the narrative portion of the survey address this difference of risk-taking in terms of 'payoff.' The dominant belief among the Corps is that a successful MTOE command 'pays off' in selection for further command, for promotion, and for selection for advanced schooling (CGSC, or SSC). Conversely, for 67% of those surveyed, USAREC is perceived as a career-ending or career-neutral assignment, almost regardless of success on the job. In effect, the Officer Corps may be saying that there exists no real incentive to "recruit."

At this point, it must be remembered that the majority of the officers responding to the current survey have never served in USAREC -- their responses then being driven largely by hearsay, rumor, 'reputation,' and perception. As surveyed, then, what is USAREC's reputation to its senior leaders? The following results provide a succinct summation of the key issues and beliefs surveyed:

1. Image: 94% perceive USAREC as having an image problem, i.e., "bad in itself, and bad for a career."
2. Avoidance: 69% took evasive action to avoid a USAREC assignment, and would avoid such service again.

3. 'Dead-end' Assignment: Only 26% believe that USAREC is a rewarding assignment. 44% believe that it is "dead-end;" and 30% were unsure of the merits/demerits of a USAREC job.

4. High Risk - Low Payoff: 73% believe that any professional or personal "gain" to be realized from a USAREC assignment is not worth the risk taken.

5. Credibility: 79% believe a major problem exists here. An often-expressed concern bordered on the issue of integrity, specifically that USAREC often puts an officer (and his career) in a direct clash with ethical issues and concerns.

6. Change: Most officers believe, however, that USAREC and the "institution" of which it is a part can change for the better.

7. Disadvantaged: 71% believe either that officers assigned to USAREC were "disadvantaged" (out of 'mainstream'), or did not know enough to render a judgment. Only 29% saw any advantage to serving.

8. Mentor Views/Recommendations: Overwhelmingly, 84% believe that the Army senior leadership discourages a USAREC job; but only 49% claim to have been so advised.

9. Career-Ending/Neutral: 67% felt that, even with a successful USAREC tour, one's career was not necessarily enhanced.

10. Survival Mode: 63% see service in USAREC as operating continuously in a survival mode. "Only numbers count!" "Twelve ARTEPs a year!"

11. Self-Recommend: 78% would not themselves recommend USAREC to peers or subordinates.

12. Aspire Service: 65% believe that officers should aspire to other assignments before accepting a USAREC one.

13. Challenging: Officers surveyed believe that USAREC is more challenging than most other assignments; yet few were willing to accept or recommend that greater challenge.

14. Best Officers to USAREC: Only 18% felt that the Army was sending its best officers to USAREC. "Elites" were assigned elsewhere.

15. Command Select: 33% believe that USAREC Command should be a Centralized Command Select position; 45% disagreed, almost half; 22% were unsure.

16. Relief Rates: 43% believe that officer relief rates are higher in USAREC, and certainly higher than in another high-risk assignment, i.e., command.

17. Specialized Assignment: 40% felt that a separate career field, or separate specialty, might be necessary for USAREC; and 45% believed that, in the words of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, "world class" executives were required in USAREC to provide the trained leadership to enhance recruiting success in the years ahead.

8. Good or Bad News: 81% "heard" more bad news than good generate and emanate from a USAREC assignment.

19. "Institution" Plays Favorites: Not a clear stand exists here regarding the institution 'protecting' officers by not assigning "fast burners" to USAREC -- 19% felt that the institution protected; 20% did not; and the balance was unsure.

20. Hard Times Ahead: 63% believed that there are rough times ahead for Army recruiting.

Clearly, it would be an understatement to say that there is some dissatisfaction among the Corps over the merits of an assignment to the Recruiting Command. I believe it interesting and germane to note how the 1975 referenced study concluded the findings of its survey:

Of equal significance are findings which indicate the total rejection of assignments to ROTC duty, garrisons, National Guard/Reserve Components and recruiting. These results are particularly revealing in view of the Army's dedicated efforts to publicize the importance of these assignments in support of today's Volunteer Army. The alleged benefits of service with one of these components identified are simply not believed by the officer corps, and these doubts will remain until such time that traditional aversion to the assignments are eradicated by demonstrated success of officers detailed to fulfill these responsibilities, to include their promotion to General Officer at the same ratio as are brigade commanders, district engineers, and high level staff officers.

Taken almost in a vacuum, I contend that these pointed remarks are also poignant and relevant directly to the present hypothesis.

Equally damaging to the USAREC story are the narrative remarks made by the 109 respondents. To savor their full flavor, they are presented here, along with the frequency of their occurrence. I have attempted to place related comments into major categories; and, subjectively, have focused on the comments which I believe are clearly descriptive, and somewhat incisive, to tell how "severe" is the current outlook by the majority of the Officer Corps today toward serving in a recruiting assignment. It is to be noted that it was not my intent to deliberately prejudice the results of the survey by not reporting positive responses -- those were simply far too few in number to be relevant in terms of formulating an overall "Corps" perspective:

#### Leadership (13)

- A "threatening" environment
- Leadership gave it a bad name
- Negative leadership is the norm
- People are treated as nothing

#### Taking Care of Its People (53)

- USAREC eats its own
- Too many good and competent guys get hurt
- Destroys too many good years of hard work
- You can get crucified despite best efforts
- Not rated on "whole man" concept

- Failure often beyond control/external influences; but leadership blamed, and career destroyed
- Success is location-dependent
- Success depends on the "luck of the draw"

#### Gain versus Loss (46)

- Too thankless and pressure-filled
- Low job satisfaction
- Not a "fun" job
- Ruthless numbers crunching
- No reward for officers; why serve?
- High casualty rates; dog-eat-dog atmosphere
- Little to gain/lots to lose
- Efforts expended exceed the professional benefits derived
- Not career enhancing
- Lack of recognition by boards
- Rewards few, and the frustrations many
- No future in USAREC service - dead end
- A No-win situation -- a "Blackhole"
- Success/failure is too clear cut
- The probability of failure is greater than the probability of success

#### The Job Itself (59)

- Does not enhance professional development
- One should stay in primary/alternate jobs
- Recruiting is out of the mainstream -- can't compete with peers who have the good jobs
- Recruiting is not "Job" related
- USAREC is too far from troops
- USAREC is a career stopper
- Too visible, and too "measurable"
- Highest risk job in the Army, and not all share equally in the risk
- High risk and no gain
- Recruiting is an exact science (measurement), and little empathy for not making mission
- Destroys years of hard work to get ahead
- USAREC (recruiting) is not soldiering

#### Senior Leaders/Institution View (26)

- Senior leaders preach "doomsday" regarding a USAREC job

- Mentors influence people to shy away
- Generals get guys out of it
- Not viewed as an important job by boards
- Instruct boards and establish floors and ceilings
- Senior officers do not understand USAREC

How to Change the Current System (48)

- Increase prestige and change perceptions
- Perhaps abrupt changes are necessary
- Send "fast burners" to USAREC; send some "recognized" top leadership to command USAREC
- Give credit for command up front and recognize company and battalion command slots
- Must be a system to enhance future command at all grades
- Make it a command select position
- Develop a career recruiting force for officers
- Make recruiting (for officers) at least an alternate specialty
- Guarantees a follow-on assignment to attract best officers
- Develop some "perk packages;" recognize added family stress as a possibility; develop incentives to serve
- Assign people to USAREC who want to be there
- Make recruiting job (or a Reserve Component job) a pre-requisite for promotion to O-5 and above, future command, and school selection
- Eliminate "behind-closed-doors" selection boards for USAREC selection
- Have alternate command designees command
- Continue to choose only ex-battalion commanders

If one accepts the results of the current survey as truly representative of the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the Officer Corps in general, there exists then a strong, negative indictment that there is indeed something wrong with a USAREC assignment; or, and perhaps this is the key issue, with a system which allows such a condition to perpetuate itself. At least, in regard to officer service in USAREC, it can be

said that OPMS, with its overall guiding principle of "enhancing the effectiveness and professionalism of the United States Army Officer Corps,"<sup>5</sup> may be a failure. It is not a slight hyperbole to conclude that officers see no advantage, and simply do not want to serve in an assignment which is still, nonetheless, so important to our Army. It can be said that OPMS, since its implementation in 1972, has never recognized the intensity of feeling or severity of the problem to the Officer Corps; and, to be sure, has never adequately addressed the relevant issues to its satisfaction.

#### What Can Be Done?

It is my contention that all is not lost, and that the system, in actual practice, is not as broken as the Corps would generally believe. Surely, recruiting success remains a high priority. However, as USAREC continues to succeed, even though successes have been slowed in recent months, it may be that a solution to what I pose as a serious dilemma to the Officer Corps will never be addressed, the "system" never changed, and a "gnawing" at the fibre of the Corps allowed to continue.

There is a story to tell about officer service in USAREC, and it has never been told. At the risk of sounding like a "voice in the wilderness," I propose to do that -- to answer the critics, to separate "right-from-wrong" perceptions of

the command, and to recommend a revised personnel selection and utilization strategy for the future.

To tell the USAREC story, one must first truly understand the 'heart and soul' of the Corps -- what it is really saying, what its real hopes and aspirations are. My analysis of the facts and perceptions as presented tell me that the Corps has high aspirations, that a career -- a satisfying and rewarding one -- is important. On the other hand, it is my sincere hope that "careerism," with all of its negative and damaging connotations, is not today a part and parcel of the Corps' makeup, even though an argument can be advanced to allege that this is, in fact, the case. "What's in it for me?" or "If the job does not enhance my career, then I want no part of it!" are what the Corps may be asking and saying. Philosophically, the Corps may believe itself to be, first and foremost, part of a "warrior" Army; and an assignment to recruiting is just not part of what is perceived to be a nobler goal. After all, isn't this how we carefully train and wean our young officers, even in their early USA and RIFC days? I believe, to the credit of the Corps, that my latter interpretation is the correct one; but, too, I must wonder if we have in fact not lost some of that sense of service, where it was believed important for a professional to serve his duty to his Country wherever that duty called.

Let me now turn to one officer's experiences and perceptions, as seen from having served as a USAREC Battalion Commander, to tell what USAREC itself is really all about in its second decade, and what the command does or does not do for a career, especially since this "career" motive is what appears to be haunting the Officer Corps. Ahead we shall see that the Corps is not entirely skewed in its thinking; but we shall also see that service in USAREC can be, and it, "rewarding," contrary to the accepted belief of the Corps.

One must first accept the fact that recruiting, too, is an honored part of our profession; and that those who serve perceive themselves to be serving in 'mainstream' Army. It is the Recruiting Force's *raison d'etre*. The force itself -- soldier and civilian alike -- is indeed a thoroughly professional one; and as such, offers to the officers who serve it a challenge far greater in scope than most other assignments in the Army. It is my experience that, when asked, most officers will concur that "USAREC is the most challenging job I have ever had," or, "USAREC has offered me a challenge which is tougher than the one I experienced when commanding my company, or my (branch) battalion." The challenge is indeed there for those who can accept it, and for those whose professional horizons are indeed broad and visionary enough to cope with it!

The critics' belief that USAREC service is not career enhancing may have some basis in fact, however; and a review of the record is appropriate, and indeed necessary, to determine if an institutional change is warranted. It may be that the philosophy of OPMS has not yet fully evolved to the point where a recruiting assignment is, in fact, one in which an officer would or should want to serve. Consider what OPMS purports to be:

OPMS is a very complex system designed to meet the requirements of the Army and the needs of the officer corps. The system was designed to be evolutionary in nature and over time OPMS has responded to the changing needs<sup>6</sup> of the Army and the individual officers.

In the case of a USAREC assignment, let us try to determine if OPMS has evolved to the point where the needs of the Officer Corps -- job satisfaction, career enrichment, advancement, and the like -- are currently being satisfied. To this end, it will serve our purpose to ascertain what USAREC service has meant to the officers in terms of promotion, future command, and selection for advanced military schooling, all ends which obviously are ultra-important to and strike at the very 'heart and soul' of the Corps as previously discussed.

Table 1 is a **statistical** compilation of ten years of promotion results (rounded percents), comparing selection rates for USAREC officers with overall Army selection rates. An analysis of promotion results is interesting, but, at best,

Table 1  
Selection for Promotion (In Zone)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Calendar Year</u>	<u>YEAR TO</u>	<u>Percentage Selected</u>
COLONEL	1976	76	45
	1977	92	44
	1978	83	53
	1979	70	40
	1980	59	53
	1981	86	51
	1982	86	50
	1983	57	45
	1984	83	49
	1985	77	53
LIEUTENANT COLONEL	1976	Unk	62
	1977	90	67
	1978	38	70
	1979	75	71
	1980	73	72
	1981	47	72
	1982	45	68
	1983	43	72
	1984	69	71
	1985	71	76
MAJOR	1976	Unk	64
	1977	87	76
	1978	39	75
	1979	79	74
	1980	74	75
	1981	81	80
	1982	60	80
	1983	87	78
	1984	75	77
	1985	63	77

presents mixed conclusions. A 10-year mean rate for promotion to Colonel reveals that 77½ of USAREC officers were promoted vis-a-vis 49½ for the rest of the Army. This difference is striking, and bears out assertions made by AWC survey respondents who have served in MILPERCEN that only Lieutenant Colonels who were not promotion risks were assigned to battalion commands in USAREC. The statistics themselves, however, can be misleading in that it has not been determined how many of those promoted were in fact 'assisted' by a USAREC assignment. It may be that officers' lots are already cast -- based on the previous record, with the promotion results then becoming somewhat less meaningful. Viewed solely from a statistical point of view, however, Lieutenant Colonels' chances for promotion are "enhanced" -- albeit indirectly -- through USAREC service. Consequently, it may be that current selection criteria and rationale need not be changed at this level, since USAREC is provided high quality command material. It should also be noted that, for each of the ten years studied, Lieutenant Colonels in USAREC have fared better annually than contemporaries serving elsewhere.

While not alarming, promotion results to Lieutenant Colonel and Major reveal a somewhat different slant (Table 1). Since 1977, a mean of 62½ of USAREC Majors have been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, as compared to 71½ for the rest of the Army. However, trends since 1982 point to the fact that the

promotion gap is narrowing annually, which suggests that the quality of Majors being assigned to USAREC is on the upswing. This is of critical importance to the Command, and to the Army, and must continue, since officers of this grade are normally charged -- among other duties -- with maintaining USAREC's multi-faceted Enlistment Standards Program, a vital program of internal reviews to insure continued, absolute integrity in the enlistment process. We can ill afford to repeat the "scandal days of 1979." Captains are promoted in USAREC at the same rate as contemporaries elsewhere -- a 9-year mean of 78%. However, since 1983, this trendline has begun moving in a negative direction, where now one must question the overall quality of officers of this rank arriving in USAREC. In my view, it is at this level where "the rubber first meets the road;" and because of the unique and difficult challenges offered, the degree of leadership and management expertise required, and the high visibility of these young officers in our civilian communities across the nation, it is here where it becomes imperative that we assign officers only of the highest calibre. The current Commanding General of USAREC, Major General Alan K. Ono, has remarked: "I consider leadership at all levels to be the key to meeting the Command's challenges. The SAGE study concluded that leadership at company and station level is the most critical element in the Command's success. I concur."<sup>7</sup> Perhaps only a "buck-up" of priority is required

to reverse what can become a serious problem. As recruiting times get tougher (and that is what is predicted), strong leadership at all levels can make a difference. In summary, however, while I have not offered promotion results over time to demonstrate continued promotion success for officers who have successfully passed through a USAREC assignment, it may be concluded that -- when viewed in its entirety at all grades -- success in USAREC, contrary to the expressed opinion of a majority of the Officer Corps, probably does not act as an inhibitor to future promotion. Indeed, it probably enhances it!

As seen by the Corps, success is also measured by selection for advanced military schooling, namely, by selection for Senior Service (SSC) and Command and General Staff (CGSC) College attendance. A review of available biographical data of past attendees at the Army War College from 1980 to the present (1985) reveals that the number of officers attending, with experience in USAREC, is on the increase:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Attendees</u>
AY-80	2
AY-81	5
AY-82	6
AY-83	11
AY-84	5
AY-85	14

Table 2 compares overall selection rates since 1975, except

Table 2  
Selection for SSC & CGSC

<u>College</u>	<u>Calendar Year</u>	Percentage Selected	
		<u>USAREC</u>	<u>Army</u>
SSC	1975	8	6
	1976	12	7
	1977	7	5
	1978	13	5
	1979	20	6
	1980	14	4
	1981	Unk	Unk
	1982	Unk	Unk
	1983	2	4
	1984	Unk	Unk
	1985	2	4
	1986	7	5
	1987	16	5
CGSC	1975	36	13
	1976	27	18
	1977	24	12
	1978	16	37
	1979	15	15
	1980	27	22
	1981	Unk	Unk
	1982	12	14
	1983	19	16
	1984	12	14
	1985	19	16
	1986	22	21
	1987	11	18

for three years where data are currently unavailable. Data shown for 1986 and 1987 are, again, striking; and perhaps USAREC has come into its own as "a career enhancing assignment." A USAREC selection rate of 16% for 1987 is impressive. Counting alternate selectees (8), it is possible for 20 current USAREC officers to attend a SSC in Academic Year 1987. Overall, it is highly probable that the total number to be attending in AY-87, with USAREC experience, will exceed the 14 currently in attendance for AY-86. As a general statement, it is now becoming obvious that USAREC is not as "dead end" as the Corps perceives; and it is safe to say that USAREC is getting its fair share of officers selected for SSC attendance.

At the CGSC level, twelve years of available data suggest that selection rates for USAREC officers is slightly higher than for the remainder of the Army. Since 1975, the overall difference is slight (a mean of 2% over twelve years in favor of USAREC). Although the selection rate comparison for AY-87 is a major shift, this seems to be an aberration from what to date has been an otherwise pro-USAREC picture. Overall, differences for CGSC are so minimal that it can be concluded that, at best, USAREC officers fare as well as their peers throughout the Army.

There appears to be a consensus that an assignment to the Recruiting Command contains considerable risk (73% on the AWC)

survey), and that relief rates from command are such that it would only be a natural consequence for officers to shy away from such an assignment. Table 3 provides three years worth of data on the subject. The table contains only raw data, and no comparison on this subject has been made with relief rates throughout the Army, either from an overall perspective, or from a specific branch viewpoint. Rates at the three grades shown do not appear to be excessive. Reliefs of Lieutenant Colonels (reliefs from command) and Majors appear to be within reasonable norms. More reliefs occur at the Captain level, which may say something to the problem of quality provided as

Table 3  
USAREC Relief Rates

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Relieved</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Branch</u>
LTC (Command)	1983	1	2	IN
	1984	4	7	AG, IN, FA, MP
	1985	1	2	IN
MAJ	1983	0	0	
	1984	1	1	AG
	1985	2	2	AG, FA
CPT (Command)	1983	13	5	*See Branch Breakout Below
	1984	16	6	
	1985	8	3	

\* AG (4), AD (5), AR (2), EN (1),  
FA (3), FI (2), IN (7), MI (2),  
MP (3), QM (3), SC (5)

was discussed earlier. However, the total number of reliefs shown, as a percent of Captains assigned, is in itself also not alarming, and it might be said that this rate too falls within reasonable norms. For the 37 officers relieved of their duties since 1983, a branch breakout is also provided. Although 'Infantry' appears to have the most reliefs, nothing can be concluded to say that there is also a "branch" risk associated with an assignment to USAREC. Reliefs cut across all of the branches as indicated.

The previously mentioned 1975 AWC study concluded that officers would remain uncommitted to viewing USAREC (et alia) as a viable career option until "demonstrated success" could be shown by either the selection of officers with USAREC experience to Colonel command positions, or to promotion to the rank of General Officer. This indeed may be the crux of the problem as seen by a senior segment of the Officer Corps. In my view, however, it is still too soon to render a final judgment on this matter; but it is equally important not to conclude that officers who have served in USAREC will not attain such statures. The Corps' ambitions to command at the O-6 level, and to attain the rank of General, are indeed lofty goals; but I contend that a USAREC assignment does not preclude their attainment. Table 4 provides data on this subject for the previous two fiscal years. While this does not provide

Table 4

Selection for Command (In Zone)  
(All Assigned Eligibles Considered)

		Percentage Selected	
<u>Command</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>USAREC</u>	<u>Army</u>
COL	FY-85	5	8
	FY-86	5	7
LTC	FY-85	13	9
	FY-86	18	6

totally comprehensive data over time, it does point up the fact that command is possible, even though LTCs fare better than do officers competing for O-6 commands.

On the issue of the probability of attaining the rank of General Officer, it is also too early to make a final judgment as to whether USAREC service functions as a preventive measure. Certainly, if one were to look at the "alumni directory" of USAREC, one is able to see, again, that USAREC officers are able to move up the promotion ladder to serve the Army in even greater positions of responsibility. Table 5 is illustrative on this subject; and while an argument can be made that, in the cases shown, officer career patterns are already set prior to serving in the Command, one must be left with the conclusion that such service does not, again, preclude promotion to General. To be sure, the USAREC Chiefs of Staff, and the USAREC

Brigade Commanders, are evidence that promotion to General is possible.

Table 5

General Officer Snapshot  
(USAREC Service)

- \* Of the 3 USAREC CGs since 1979, one has attained the rank of General (VCSA), one has been promoted to LTG, and one has recently given up command.
- \* Six of USAREC's Deputy CGs, since 1975, have attained higher rank. Two have become LTGs and currently command Army Corps; two have been promoted to MG; one has commanded a Division; and two others are too junior to have progressed further at this time.
- \* Three USAREC Chiefs of Staff have attained General Officer rank; one has been promoted to MG.
- \* Four USAREC Brigade Commanders have been promoted to BG since 1981.

Perhaps the critics will never be silenced; but we are now able to look somewhat objectively at over ten years worth of 'record' to show that USAREC does not have to be a dead-end job -- indeed, it is not -- or as one officer in the survey commented "a blackhole." USAREC is a viable career opportunity; it is career enhancing; and, as time will prove, officers who have served in USAREC -- from the Captain to the Colonel level -- will continue to make their marks in the Army.

### The Future

The fact that there exist today great dissatisfaction, suspicion, and an almost total rejection by the Corps of the value (career motive) of a USAREC assignment should be alarming. As the USAREC story is told and becomes more understood, the negative perceptions and feelings -- largely the result of hearsay -- may be abated. They may never disappear completely until the system which selects officers to serve is changed, or until the job itself becomes more attractive as one highly-prized and sought after by the Corps.

There is no easy solution which can satisfy both the needs of the Army (always a top priority) and the needs of the Officer Corps. But we must begin to develop a system which can satisfy both. Surely, the enigma of USAREC and the perceived stigma attached to it can not be allowed to continue. The system can continue to select officers via "behind-closed-doors" selection boards, which the Corps believes is done and finds suspect (with USAREC's current image); or the system can elevate a USAREC assignment itself (and make the Corps believe it to a higher plane). USAREC certainly has a high priority for personnel, and the system believes that it is providing high quality officers to serve (and it is) -- but even those who do serve (and because of their professionalism as a group do quite well) wonder what they did to "deserve" such recognition.

Manning the force through the remainder of the twentieth century will be no small task. It is the top priority of the Army. The Secretary of Defense, Caspar W. Weinberger, stated it thusly:

The most vital element of our improved force structure is manpower. Without sufficient numbers of qualified, motivated, trained people to operate and maintain today's weapons systems and to keep them supplied with munitions, fuel, and spare parts, the significance of the improvements made in force structure and modernization would be greatly diminished.<sup>8</sup>

While we may be leaving this important task to high-quality, professional officers, over the long term, we may also be leaving this critical mission to be performed by amateurs. Clearly, we must send to the Recruiting Command, now and for the future, the best qualified, the best motivated (motivation throughout the recruiting process is the key element), and the best prepared officers we can find.

I would now like to suggest a course of action for improvement of our present system in providing and developing highly qualified "recruiter-leaders." Any proposed change can be evolutionary, and must be; but implementation is required now in order for the Army to have a revised system in being by the early 1990s.

Perhaps we need to look no further than to review what

the AWC officers have recommended -- what they perceive as possible solutions toward improving the merits of a USAREC officer assignment. They recommend changing perceptions and improving the prestige and image of serving. I have attempted to do that; but the Army and USAREC must also do their parts to solve the current image problem. They recommend making abrupt changes (without elaboration); but this approach may cause more harm, and really change nothing for the better. They recommend making USAREC a command designated position -- a recommendation which may have some merit. They recommend creating a separate career field for officers, an alternate specialty, which for the future may be a natural evolution as recruiting becomes more complex, more specialized, more intensive, and more competitive. They recommend leaving the current system alone; but to do nothing, changes nothing, and change is needed. They recommend creating incentives to serve, and creating "perc packages," which should entice officers to want to serve. Whatever is to be done, however, must be best for the Army, best for USAREC, and best for the Officer Corps. For the latter, we must devise a system that is supportive of officer career goals, and one that will continue to provide an "equality of opportunity" for growth, maturity, and advancement. We must 'optimize' a system for an uncertain future, and we must develop a blueprint in moving toward the creation of a "Recruiting Executive," highly skilled to understand the in-

tracacies of the profession, and technically prepared to cope with the demands of a very challenging assignment.

The current system selects officers for USAREC command positions primarily on their "demonstrated ability to command." For Captain and Lieutenant Colonel selectees, this of course means that, in the main, most officers have already been successful company and battalion level commanders -- all officers who have been successful in their own right in their primary (branch) skills. This, for the most part, provides supposedly 'quality' officers to the Recruiting Command; and, on measure, works quite well for USAREC (and the Army). One may argue then that if the system is 'working,' there exists no reason to change it.

My study of the problem, however, suggests strongly that the problems of officer dissatisfaction and almost total rejection of such an assignment are severe enough to call for an immediate solution. Further, the intracacies of the job, which will become even more complex in the future, indicate that we must institute an entirely new system to insure that our future executives (commanders) emerge from "the most qualified" category of officers to perform this important duty.

Perhaps the suggestion to create "perc packages" holds the most promise, even though such an approach can have negative connotations. It would seem logical that a system to en-

tice officers to want to serve (and who possess the promise innately to serve well) is one which will begin to remove any stigma currently attached to service in USAREC.

Why not a separate officer specialty for recruiting? There are, to be sure, unconventional career paths in the Army, and specialization is certainly not a new idea. Specialization is necessary in a complex age; and while the decision to add specialties is usually a painful one, since it also usually involves the additional creation and management of separate career progression models, a USAREC specialty may be an idea whose time has come -- a de facto recognition to the Officer Corps of an important job to be accomplished. This fact alone can work to improve the "image" of the assignment, i.e., an official recognition of the importance attached to the job.

One must admit that external factors are continuously influencing the environment in which our current OPMS operates (and USAREC is no exception), and changes in the environment necessitate continuous adjustments and alterations of policy on how the Officer Corps is selected, trained and managed. Specialization, when warranted -- and I contend that a recruiting specialty is warranted -- is likewise consistent with current OPMS philosophy:

Specialization. The increasing complexity of Army assignments and the greater length of time required to master the knowledge

associated with such positions have required greater specialization, education, and training to develop competence.

An additional specialty, as an option, with the requisite schooling opportunities to thoroughly train our future recruiting leaders and to make the skill more attractive -- such skills as marketing, sales generation, demographic analysts, motivational and educational specialists (skills which incidently are easily transferrable to the civilian world, which, in turn, will make officers more marketable upon retirement) -- seems to be worthy of serious consideration. In selected areas within the specialty, e.g., marketing, or sales generation, or education, service with industry and our leading sales corporations, and with our educational institutions at the highest levels, would not only expose our best officers to the civilian world (Army image), but would also provide selected officers with the latest techniques and innovations to be applied, in turn, to subsequent utilization assignments in USAREC. Officers would clearly see such an option as rewarding, professionally and personally; and I contend would entice sufficient quality officers well into the future to want to serve in USAREC. To put such a 'system' in place would of course take time, and no doubt would affect officers primarily at the O-3 level prior to selection of "tracks" or alternate specialties. This suggests that the current system of selecting Captains for USAREC be continued (still the

most critical decision point). It also suggests that perhaps an 8-10 year period would be necessary to have an "evolutionary" system in place for the future. But the time to begin is now!

An alternative approach to the current method of selecting Captains for recruiting duty is to institute a centralized command selection process to consider and select only best qualified Captains who have previously demonstrated competence to command. This is an entirely new idea, since boards now are not convened to select officers for any assignment at this level. This approach provides "equality" to the selection process (all eligibles considered), and ups the ante on the importance of a recruiting assignment, i.e., works to change the image. More importantly, one must realize that there is an "aura" of being selected by a centralized board process that is only reflective of an understanding of the human psyche. It must be remembered that we may be prematurely demotivating some extremely competent officers by assigning them now to USARMC jobs if the "pessimism" associated with such an assignment is allowed to continue. A new system is called for which can guarantee to the Recruiting Command its "fair share" of only the Army's best qualified, young commanders, who must truly recognize that they have been specially selected for this important assignment to the Army.

Until such a system recommended is in place long enough for repeated USAREC assignments, and until an adequate number of trained officers possessing a recruiting specialty can evolve, a similar case can be made now for extending the command selection process to fill battalion command positions in USAREC. Currently, the system takes great pains to select "only the best qualified" for command at the battalion and brigade level (MTOE command). It is my belief that this is done now to the exclusion and detriment of commands equally as complex, equally as important, and equally as demanding. To be sure, providing highly qualified officers to command in "designated" troop positions is important. To provide similar quality to USAREC is equally as important. But to say that USAREC requires only officers who have previously demonstrated outstanding capacity to command is also to say perhaps that our troop assignments for which we now select officers by board process may not require such previously demonstrated competence. This appears to be a ludicrous argument since it suggests that a greater risk can be accepted in our war-fighting side of the house. I contend then that command of an MTOE unit and command of a recruiting battalion are of equal importance to the Army. Consequently, if we are to change the USAREC image to the Officer Corps (if that is important), and if we are to satisfy the aspirations of the entire Corps, it seems only logical that USAREC command positions at the battalion level be made

a part of the command selection process. USAREC certainly would receive no less in quality (it may be enhanced); but more importantly, if both types of commands are commands for which all officers compete -- officers would recognize that both commands are of equal importance -- the stigma of now serving in the Recruiting Command would fade, and hopefully disappear. Eventually, this recommended board process would be eliminated in favor of boards convened specifically to select officers for USAREC battalion command positions from the pool of officers with previous USAREC experience, and possessive of a recruiting specialty. Such boards could be an adjunct of the current board process. In the long term, as recruiting becomes more complex and sophisticated, USAREC would be made a stronger command in the process.

Beyond the recommendations already proposed, it may be necessary to institute a monetary incentive to cause officers to want to serve in USAREC. Many locations in USAREC are distant from military facilities, and can cause a financial burden to those who serve. However, such a course of action is not recommended, and hopefully the Corps would feel offended because of its professionalism to desire such a "perc."

Above all, the senior leadership in the Army must change its perceptions of the merits of serving in USAREC. It must be convinced that USAREC is a smart career choice, and it must begin to recommend it to their officers as an important and

career enriching assignment. This alone may be a key ingredient in changing the current USAREC image. Certainly, officers who have served in USAREC must become good-will ambassadors of the assignment, which does not entirely seem to be the case now. A system which 'recognizes' USAREC as important in the overall hierarchy of jobs will bring about the positive change which is necessary.

Recommendations advanced in this essay are not intended to make USAREC as the only important job in the Army in which an officer should want to serve. Proposed changes to the current system are not guaranteed to be a panacea to cure all the perceived ills of the present system. Recommendations offered, however, do purport to remove a cancer which lingers, a "perception cancer" which must be eliminated from the minds of the Officer Corps. Until an assignment in USAREC moves from the lackluster to a demonstrable, career-enhancing assignment, no change is possible, and officers will continue to avoid such service. In 14 years, nothing has changed very much; and change must occur. Recruiting is so important to the Army and to the Nation that we must now devise a long-range strategy which will continue the recruiting success we have to date enjoyed.

ENDNOTES

1. Alan K. Ono, MG, State of the Command Address, Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), 27 September 1985, p. 19.
2. Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), Telephonic Interview with Chief of Personnel, Administration and Logistics, HQ, USAREC, 14 January 1986.
3. Llyle J. Barker, Jr., ITC, et al. Professional Development of the Military Executive (Under the Officer Personnel Management System), Research Paper, Carlisle Barracks: The US Army War College, 27 May 1975, p. 37.
4. Ibid., p. 38.
5. Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Pamphlet 600-3, 10 July 1984, p. 7 (hereafter referred to as "DA Pam 600-3").
6. Ibid., p. 7.
7. Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), Recruiter Journal, Volume 38, Number 6, July 1985, p. 2.
8. Caspar W. Weinberger, Report of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress on the FY 87 Budget, FY 1983 Authorization Request and FY 1987-1991 Defense Programs, 5 February 1986, p. 135.
9. DA Pam 600-3, p. 7.

Statistical data in the provided Tables 1 through 5 are synopses of Command Statistical Reports from the Officer Personnel Management Division, Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC); and confirmed, in part, by Headquarters, United States Army Military Personnel Center Memorandum, OPMS Orientation and Counselling Guide, 29 October 1985, pp. 140-142.

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8 - 86